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ABSTRACT

The founding of western frontier colleges is examined in light of the changing patterns of theological thought present in the Antebellum period. It is suggested that Donald G. Tewksbury's (1969) comprehensive study of the Antebellum colleges provided an important theoretical framework. In this work, "The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War," Tewksbury focused attention on the numbers of sectarian colleges that later failed. He believed the decline in the Western colleges was due to the competing activities of various denominations. It is suggested that in considering the Antebellum institutions, each denominational history needs to be examined, along with the socioreligious effects of the Second Great Awakening. Some of the causes of the failure of denominational colleges included changing economic conditions, political influences, the rise of the public school system, and other influences in the West. In addition, to understand evolutionary changes in major themes of post-Revolutionary theology, it is important to consider how home missions and evangelism were nurtured by the New Haven, "New Lights," and the interrelationships of the clergy and their "genetic lineage" traced through from Jonathan Edwards. (SW)

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TEWKSBURY REVISITED: THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING, EVANGELISM, REVIVALISM AND DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE FOUNDING OF WESTERN COLLEGES, 1790-1860

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid proliferation of sectarian colleges in the West during the Antebellum Period is a common theme in the literature of higher education. Most historians sooner or later return to the theoretical framework first proposed in the 1930's by Donald Tewksbury. Centering most of his attention on the significant numbers of sectarian colleges which failed, Tewksbury believed their demise was because of the competing activities of the various denominations and religious societies. [1] There is little room for a serious criticism of Tewksbury's work; a careful reading of his The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War leaves one impressed with the power and magnitude of the data and statistical information used to support his conclusions. I would like to suggest that one element is missing: what really motivated the people and the organizations in the founding of colleges in the Western frontier? Denominations and religious societies are usually formed

by groups of people with common goals and objectives; but ideas, philosophy and theology, as it were, these move men and women to action. The content of this investigation seeks to reexamine the founding of Western frontier colleges in light of the dynamically changing patterns of theological thought present in the Antebellum period. Understanding some pertinent developments in the way the "Kingdom of God" was being pursued can provide new insights into the phenomenon of the Western colleges. Specifically, it is the motive of the modus operandi which is the focus of this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Second Great Awakening dawned with a renewed religious fervor marked by dramatic religious revivals in many locations. This "awakening" was much more than the sum total of its zeal; it was prompted by major changes in theology that are uniquely "American." To accurately reconstruct this era, one must know what was meant by the terms: "New Light" or "Old Light," "New School" vs. "Old School." Was "New Haven" just a town in Connecticut? Why were the Presbyterians so committed to the founding of colleges? At first, why did the Methodists and Baptists refrain from aggressively establishing colleges yet noticeably succeed in converting large numbers of souls? Tewksbury carefully subdivided his American Colleges and Universities into a comparison by denomination, time period and demographics and did not avoid speaking to these questions. It is his analysis

in summation which I find too "journalistic" in style which I would like amplify; it is his perfunctory conclusions which I believe need an epilogue. In a manner of speaking, his written "Obituary" on the demise of the sectarian college, although well known, needs a proper "death certificate." What factors contributed to the cause of death? Let's illustrate this point with an analogy.

Some years back as a high school "Med Club" Advisor, I heard a county coroner relate this story as representative of some of the real-life situations he had to unravel. An elderly gentleman suddenly lurches forward from a crowded bus stop and falling flat upon the pavement is run over by a semi-truck. The length of the skid marks strongly suggests that the truck driver was well above the speed limit. The elderly man is very dead and there is noticeable damage to the corpse from its encounter with the truck. Very simple, you say; the truck driver killed him! No, the plot thickens. Our departed senior citizen was very well insured recently and with a double indemnity clause included in the policy. Was it an accident? Did he lose his balance or trip, falling into the street? If he did, then his heirs stand to collect one nice "chunk of change." Was he pushed? Then, there is murder involved, but at least the insurance company stands to pay only a standard, single death benefit. Should the truck driver who was speeding be charged with involuntary manslaughter? I might add that he is being named in a suit for wrongful death by the heirs. As an independent hauler, he is

self-insured and the limits of his liability policy are no where near the amount being asked for by the grieving heirs. One thing is obvious —— the old man is dead. Surprisingly, though, none of your conclusions to this point are correct. A post-mortem by the coroner revealed that the elderly gentleman had had an instantaneous, massive coronary —— he was already dead when he hit the street! The truck driver was absolved and the insurance company got off cheap with a single death benefit for "death by natural causes."

What has been titled the "Tewksbury hypothesis" states that many small, sectarian colleges were founded by various denominations whose competing interests eventually caused many of these colleges to fail. [2] The "old man was run over by a truck and is very dead." Recently, historians of higher education have sought to "reopen the case" on the demise of the Antebellum colleges. [3] I believe that the Western college movement's "death certificate" needs to include more information on the many contributory factors. In particular, the secular historian could profit from works like: A Genetic History of New England Theology by Frank Hugh Foster which deals with the personal interrelationships of the theologians themselves and the extensive influence of Jonathan Edwards, the Elder. [4] The flavour of the western settlements and their religious ideals can be sensed in Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850 by William Warren Sweet. [5] As well, Winthrope S. Hudson's American Protestantism or his Religion in America shed valuable light on the contribution of

religious beliefs to the cultural milieu of the nineteenth century. [6] Of late, Edwin S. Gaustad has produced an outstanding work dealing with religion in America in his A Documentary History of Religion in America to the Civil War. [7]

In addition to a review of the literature, this investigation analyzes the historical data associated with various denominations from a variety of origins —— a primary source document being a work compiled in 1844 by I. Daniel Rupp. [8] Although the focus of this study centers in the theological climate that surrounded the founding of the Antebellum colleges, politico-religious and socio-religious factors are considered as well. Our underlying thesis is that Tewksbury's concept of "denominational competition" is an inadequate evaluation of a multifaceted collision of ideals and forces spawned by the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening and its accompanying Revivalism were strongly rooted in what was a dramatic transformation of New England theology. Herein lies our major concentration of study; therefore, southern United States history will not be examined. A further limitation is that the portion of the Western frontier to be examined will be the "bordering frontier" east of the Mississippi, more specifically the Western Reserve and its adjacent territories.

EASTERN SOCIETY AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE WEST

On September 3, 1783 in Article II of the "Treaty of Peace with Great Britain," "His Brittanic Majesty [having] acknowledged the said United States," ceded to our nation all the lands

of the Western frontier. [9] This vast tract of land soon came to represent unlimited opportunities and helped to spark the republican dreams of free men wresting a mighty nation out of the wilderness. Large numbers of "Americans" along with the newly arrived immigrant settled in these areas because of the availability of inexpensive land. In 1843, just sixty years after the "Treaty of Peace," Ohio in just forty years had increased its population thirty-three fold, Tennessee's inhabitants had enlarged nearly eight times and Kentucky's numbers had more that tripled. In the period, 1801-1843, total U.S. population also nearly tripled. [10] In comparison from 1815 to 1857, the United Kingdom lost 4,683,194 persons to emigration with the majority, 2,830,687, coming to the United States. [11] Yet, so expansive was the American frontier, that the cities by modern standards were very small and the overall population density was low. Howe reports that in 1840 Summit County, Ohio, had 22,469 persons with a density of 45 persons/ sq. mile. The future county seat of Akron was a growing town of 1664 people. [12]

The frontiersman was viewed with much moral apprehension by their "proper" Eastern brethren. The President of Yale College, Timothy Dwight, described a western Vermont frontiersman:

> "These men cannot live in regular society. They are too idle, too talkative, too passionate, too prodigal, and too shiftless to acquire either property or character. They are impatient of the restraints of law, religion, and morality, and grumble about the taxes by which the Rulers, Ministers and Schoolmasters are supported... under the pressure of poverty, the fear of gaol, and consciousness of public contempt, they leave their native places, and betake themselves to the wilderness." [13]

There were increasing reports by travelers of the low status of moral conditions present in many areas of the West. Gaddis notes Francis Asbury's concerns about the flickering spirit of religion on the frontier. Asbury estimated not one in a hundred came to the West "to get religion; rather to get plenty of good land." He feared that many would eventually lose their souls. [14] Other pious men were shocked at the "drinking, the fighting, and utter disregard paid to the Sabbath Day." [15] Many were "terrified at the drunkers, the vice, the gambling, the brutal fights, the gouging, the needless duels they beheld on every hand." [16] Andrew Jackson ascending to the Presidency in 1828 did little to lessen eastern fears; this excerpt from a report to the American Home Missionary Society in 1829 reveals the prevailing sentiment:

> "The strength of the nation lies beyond the Alleghany. The center of dominion is fast moving in that direction. The ruler of this country is growing up in the Great Valley. Leave him without the gospel and he will be a ruffian giant." [17]

Proper New Englanders like Dwight were probably exaggerating to some degree; Timothy Flint, a Harvard educated missionary in Ohio, strongly disagreed with Dwight's estimation of the frontiersman:

> I have found the frontiersman to be generally amiable and virtuous... his general motive was to be a freeholder, to have plenty of rich land... not rude or inhospitable...hardy, adventurous, hospitable, rough but sincere and [an] upright race of people...[but added] they care little about ministers, and think less about paying them. [18]

The American frontier was not the cause of the nation's moral problems nor its only symptom. Birdsall indicates that throughout New England only a veneer of orthodoxy and religion

was left. Many blamed this moral morass on the French atheism which had diffused throughout the colonies during the Revolution. [19] Sweet has explained that the strong Anti-Loyalist sympathies had caused some to abandon certain religious denominations like the Episcopalian Church because of a perceived English State identity. He also maintains that even in schools like Yale College a generally tolerant view of Diest philosophy reigned and alludes to Dwight's concern over the numerous 'Societies of the Illuminati' and the 'Jacobin Clubs.' [20] The Reverend Jedidiah Morse even published a treatise where he outlined a sinister plot centered in the Bavarian Illuminati to undermine all religion and morality in America. This he believed was on account of the "Frenchified Jeffersonians." The newly emerging Federalists capitalized on the melodrama stimulated by such rhetoric. [21] As Hannah has pointed out, clerical French sympathies fostered during our alliance with France at the time of the Revolutionary War quickly disintegrated when the horrors of the bloody Reign of Terror became apparent. [22] Into this context of social and religious conditions, the Second Great Awakening was initiated.

WITH THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING —— "A GENETIC HISTORY"

The beginnings of the Second Great Awakening have been traced to different areas by religious historians. Birdsall remarks that it quietly began in several Connecticut towns in the years 1797-1799. In Somers under the ministry of Reverend Charles Backus, in Canton with Reverend Jeremiah Hallock, and in Torringford

by Reverend Samuel Mills, revivals and a "relish for the doctrines of the Bible" stirred the hearts of young people in particular. [23] Cairns points to an earlier date of 1787 when three students at Hampton-Sidney College became concerned for their own spiritual condition. After confessing their sin one to another and seeking mutual forgiveness, the insuing revival on the campus was carried to Washington College "from there [it spread] throughout the Presbyterian Church in the South." Cairns goes on to say that:

> The New England Congregational phase of the revival began at Yale in 1802 under the leadership of President Timothy Dwight, whose earnest scholarly chapel messages on infidelity and the Bible destroyed the shallow infidelity of students. About a third of the student body professed a conversion during the revival, which later spread to Dartmouth, Williams and other colleges. [24]

Richard Beard indicates that a "great revival of religion" occurred in May, 1797 in the Gaspar River Congregation, Kentucky under the ministry of Reverend James McGready who had studied under McMillan at Jefferson College. Later in September, 1798 McGready experienced similar results with congregations at Red River and Muddy River. In 1800, the first large "camp meeting" commenced at Shiloh in Cumberland County, Kentucky. [25] Cairns confirms these stirrings by citing the Cane Ridge camp meeting held by McGready in August, 1801 where nearly ten thousand people were present. This particular revival was accompanied "by strange physical phenomena such as falling, jerking, rolling, dancing, and barking." [26] Leonard Woolsey Bacon who wrote in the latter portion of the nineteenth century confirms these strange manifestations of the Cumberland Revivals. In an incident personally related to him by the disting-

uished Methodist preacher, Dr. David P. Durbin, Bacon reconstructs Durbin's experience:

> "Standing near the platform from which he was to preach at a camp meeting, he observed a powerfully built young backwoodsman who was manifestly there with no better intent than to disturb and breakup the meeting. Presently it became evident that the young man was conscious of some influence taking hold of him to which he was resolved not to yield; he clutched with both hands a hickory sapling next [to] which he was standing, to hold himself steady, but was whirled round and round, until the bark of the sapling peeled off under his grasp. But, as in the cases referred to by [Lorenzo] Dow, the attack was attended by no religious sentiment whatever." 27

Rather than looking to specific locations or meetings, it is more accurate to say that this "Awakening" began more or less simultaneously throughout the land. Is there a single underlying reason for this movement of the Spirit of God?

Frank Hugh Foster's book, A Genetic History of New England Theology, offers one explanation —— direct personal and hereditary links to a number of the period clergy. These men set the stage for the Second Great Awakening with some major developments in theology. Our discussion begins with a review of the contributions of Jonathan Edwards, the central figure of the First Great Awakening. Edwards, a graduate of Yale in 1720, initiated a major reappraisal of Calvinistic doctrine with his work on the Freedom of the Will, 1754. Involved in revivals which sprang up between 1734-1740, Edwards had witnessed that the Old Calvinism or "hyper-Calvinism" with its strict predestinationism ran counter to men choosing their own fates. [28] Responding to Edwards' sermons like "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," 1741, many Congregationalists were rejecting what had become a weakened congregational

identification through the allowing of membership based on a more generalized sacramental "Half-Way" Covenantism (actually proposed by Edwards' grandfather Solomon Stoddard). [29] With President Jonathan Edwards, the Younger (1745-1801) who was Jonathan Edwards' son begins a transformation of theology which will continue in an unbroken chain down to the individuals of the Second Great Awakening. Foster's most outstanding contribution is seen in his chronicle of "theological propagation" from Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) to Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875).

As Foster points out, Edwards the Elder discipled Joseph Bellamy whose fifty year term as pastor at Bethleham, Connecticut placed him in a position to affect Congregational theology and policy-making throughout New England. A second close associate of Edwards was Samuel Hopkins who interjected a rational metaphysics into what would become one of two branches of the New Divinity. Although Hopkins was basically Edwardean in his theology, his essays on "Systems of Doctrine" equated sin with selfishness and his concept of 'disinterested benevolence'was widely accepted by Congregationalist ministers. More important, Hopkins greatly influenced Nathaniel Emmons who became the mentor of Professor Leonard Woods of Andover College. Woods' students included Asa Mahon who became the first president of Oberlin College and an associate of Finney along with Henry B. Smith and William G.T. Shedd at Union Seminary. Together, these theologians further generated a continuous evolution of Edwardean Calvinism or "Old School Calvinism." [30] This is only part of the "genetic" connections; Jonathan Edwards' grandson was Timothy Dwight who was

president of Yale College from 1786 to 1798. Dwight thoroughly indoctrinated Nathaniel Taylor and Lyman Beecher who lead lesser revival movements in the early nineteenth century to become very important "evangelical statesmen" of sorts. Taylor and Beecher later combined their efforts, modified their stand on the "New Measures" and accepted Finney as the main 'standard-bearer' of evangelical revivalism. [31]

These genetic and chronological relationships between the New England clergy are important for three reasons. First, an evolution of theological thought about sin and the nature of salvation occurs. Hannah points out that the New England theologians after Edwards sought to "improve Calvinism" by redefining the "means" of redemption, the issue of Universal salvation and the nature of sin. What resulted was a demise of hyperCalvinism through a "humanized soteriology" devoid of the miraculous and evangelism which stressed "moral action in the context of a virtuous environment." [32] Secondly, whereas the early stages of the Second Great Awakening were spontaneous and limited to the ministries of a few individuals, the second phase was controlled and orchestrated by a much larger segment of the clergy. Birdsall explains:

> While the first stage of the revivals saw the expression of intense religious feelings coming from solitary individuals and building into numerous close though temporary communities, the second stage witnessed a kind of consolidation and crystalization of this spirit, in which the clergy rather than the people played the more active role. At the same time that clergymen were adding to the force of the Second Great Awakening by unifying various local revivals through a huge religious journalism, they

> also, at least in New England, were very careful to try to eliminate any of the evidences of wildness or religious hysteria. They were ecclesiastical statesmen deeply aware of such dangers of democratic enthusiasm as they had seen in their own recent history: the first Great Awakening, the French Revolution, Shay's Rebellion. 33

Lastly, as the central figures of the Revivals emerged proposing countercompeting means to evangelize the West, considerable turmoil was created within the major denominations affecting their Home Missions' efforts and the establishment of colleges. For example, strong objections were raised over Finney's "New Measures" of revival and the positions taken by prominant individuals were openly debated causing some stress within the established church leadership. Committed to cooperative thrusts into the Western frontier under the Plan of Union of 1801, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians were especially divided on the issue of the <u>form</u> which revivalism should be allowed to take. In 1827 at New Lebanon, New York, the New Haven Divines and those more specifically aligned as Hopkinsian met with Finney and his supporters to discuss this question. No one doubted the reports of success recently seen in the 'Burned-Over District'; it was the methods which were being called into question. As Lyman Beecher related:

> "It was not a question of orthodoxy, nor of the reality of the revivals, but of wrong measures. They sought to explain, or deny what we had heard on credible testimony. We were not convinced. We stood out against them as having been disturbers of the churches." 34

The reaction against the "excessive enthusiasm" of the revivals became a major divisive element of public debate, at times not aired very politely. The verbal battles between Asahel Nettleton and Finney were bitter and hotly contested on a national level.

Although he would later reverse his position, at this point Beecher attempted to intervene and cautioned Nettleton in a letter dated May 28, 1828:

> ...he [Nettleton] shouldn't take this on, [that his] "character and high standing in the Church is too important to be brought down into a protracted controversy of this kind." [35]

These reactions were short-lived and eventually Revivalism was wedded to the New Haven theology to produce a very different concept of evangelism. Hannah refers to the creation of a "culturized gospel" which spoke zealously to an optimistic, democratic generation with a message "that reflected more a rationalistic biblicism than a biblical gospel. The central focus on the doctrines of Grace and Sin were replaced with a politico-eschatological hope that too closely connected Christianity with the government. [36] As the eastern "establishment" either adopted or rejected this "New Light", denominational efforts in penetrating the West would be enhanced or blunted.

EVANGELICAL REVIVALISM AND A CHRISTIAN AMERICA

Charles Grandison Finney has been called the most significant of the Antebellum revivalists. His close association with Nathaniel Taylor insured that the "New Light" divinity would be perpetuated in the mainstream of nineteenth century revivalism. [37] A synthesis of Finney's thoughts reveals three important themes which relate evangelism (as seen in the revivals) to the founding of the Western colleges. First is Finney's urgent "Millenialism" which translated into a "here-and-now" building of the "Kingdom of God." As a moral agent with a regenerated will, man through

benevolent action could contribute to the coming of Christ's Kingdom on the earth. But, the conversion of sinners was at first essential for all other reforms would be accomplished easily with a company of souls saved and renewed through the revivals. [38] Second, the essence of the Gospel, said Finney, was the redeeming qualities of God's moral principles as taught and exemplified by Christ. These principles demanded the institution of "moral government" on the earth; America was to be the living testimony to the moral rectitude of God's principles of moral government and Divine Law. [39] Third, God was a benevolent Being and the sinner could act to save himself if he responded with his heart to this Divine Benevolence and then lived out that change of heart and mind through the demonstration of a life of service to mankind. [40]

The Western frontier was seen as a specific test of these grand ideals. As Weddle quotes Lyman Beecher:

> "The moral destiny of our nation, and all our institutions and hopes, and the world's hopes turns on the character of the West, and the competition now is for [that] of preoccupancy in the education of the rising generation, in which Catholics and infidels have got the start of us ... If we gain the West, all is safe; if we lose it, all is lost." [41]

In the expansion of the population westward, Tewksbury explained that the religious forces continued to strive to counteract the spiritual destitution of the new frontier settlements. Churches and schools were viewed as absolute necessities:

> There was hope that if churches and schools kept pace with the tide of migration, and these vast solitudes were presently filled by intelligent and Christian population, our country would be a blessing to the whole earth...to plant Christianity in the West is as grand an undertaking as it was to plant it in the Roman Empire, with unspeakably greater permanence and power. [42]

Let there be no mistake, many individuals whose hearts were touched by the spirit of the Second Awakening dedicated themselves zealously to life-long commitment that expressed itself in service in the ministry or in higher education. The "Yale Band" of 1828-33 is one excellent example. Twelve divinity students at Yale College made a pact to go west to found centers for religious instruction. Because of the careful chronicling of events by one of the Band, Flavel Bascom, accounts read from his diaries reveal the sacrifices endured by the other members of the group. College-founding was one notable distinction of the long, rich life of Theron Baldwin who founded Illinois College, served at Monticello Seminary and was one of the first secretaries of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West. Also serving the SPCTEW, Julian M. Sturtevant taught at Illinois College and was later appointed its president in 1844 serving the college in that capacity for thirty-two years. [43]

One final thought seems fitting in closing our glimpse of the spirit of evangelical revivalism. What personal goals motivated these efforts? Were the institutions of higher education also expressions of this evangelistic zeal? One answer is found in the concept of "Christian Perfection." Asa Mahan explains:

> It is the consecration of our whole being to Christ, and the perpetual employment of all our powers in his service. It is the perfect assimilation of our entire character to that of Christ, having at all times, and under all circumstances the "same mind that was also in Christ Jesus." It is in the language of Mr. Wesley, "In one view, purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is giving God all the heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body and substance to God. In another

> view, it is all the mind that was in Christ Jesus, enabling us to walk as he walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, from all inward as well as outward pollution. It is the renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it. In yet another, it is loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves." 44

Institutionally, a determined "Christian" cause was at the heart of the foundational purposes of most Antebellum colleges. At Oberlin College where many social reform movements were nurtured, the sense of "Christian mission" was of paramount concern in defining the meaning to life. Oberlin's third president, James H. Fairchild, explains:

> But the Oberlin idea was first Christian and evangelical, and afterwards reformatory. It was not to realize some special fancy, or to accomplish some particular outward change, that the people came and planted their institutions in the wilderness. Their aims were as broad as the Gospel itself, and all proposed reforms were at once tested by their bearing upon the general Christian life and work. The predominance of this idea saved them from any wild fanaticism. An intelligent Christian earnestness is the best security against the extravagances of social reform. 45

SECOND GREAT AWAKENING, SECTARIANISM AND DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE FOUNDING OF COLLEGES

The Second Great Awakening was a period of theological diversity which set the stage for a kind of sectarian and denominational "survival of the fittest." The Western frontier generated the "selective pressures" which favored some religious groups over others. As Tewksbury explained, not all denominations placed the same value on an educated clergy. Those ministries which regarded evangelical fervor more than learning and scholarship tended to lack real incentive for college building. 46 An example is

the Methodists who started as a religious missionary society and were for a time regarded as "enemies of learning." In the Methodist Society's Book of Discipline (1784) this statement appears: "gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better." [47] How successful were the Methodists with this ordering of their priorities? These statistics drawn from Rupp's data of 1844 speak well of the Methodist incursion into the West:

YEAR	PREACHERS CIRCUIT/ ASSIGNED	ADHERENTS WHITE	COLORED*	TOTAL
1773	10			1160
1786	117	18,791	1890	20,681
1800	287	51,442	13,452	64,894
1815	704	167,978	43,187	211,165
1831	2010	437,024	76,090	513,114
1837	8101 3147/4954	570,123	79,679	649,802
1843	12,016 4286/7730	936,736	131,789	1,068,525

* Which includes all Christian Indians [48]

Before 1831, the Methodists had established two colleges, one seminary and two academies. In the period 1831-41, they established ten colleges, two universities, three seminaries, four academies and two manual labor schools. [49] Notice that in its first sixty years the Society founds only five schools but lists over an half-million adherents to Methodism, while in slightly more than the next ten years the listed adherents will double and twenty-one schools will be built. [50] In the same period of time, the Presbyterian Church will directly control eleven colleges, four univer-

sities and five theological seminaries in conjunction with only 1931 ministers, 2092 churches and 159,137 members (as communicants). [51] In the June edition of the 1859 Ladies Repository, this listing of the "Leading Denominations in Illinois" appears:

LEADING DENOMINATIONS IN ILLINOIS, 1859

Denominations	Churches	Ministers	Membership
Methodist	765	660*	82,704
Baptist	492	414	29,285
Congregationalist	159	152	10,250
New School Presbyterian	159	159	8,299

*does not reflect traveling preachers, there were claimed to be 1146 local preachers totally in the state. [52]

Using Illinois as one sample of information, the apparent success of the Methodists and the Baptists over the more established of the eastern denominations as it relates to frontier evangelism raises some questions. What unique appeal did these religious groups have with the people of the western settlements? Was it their theology or methodology which accounted for the number of converts? One clue is seen in Rupp's data concerning the Methodists; in 1837 the Society began reporting the numbers of preachers as either "circuit" or "assigned." In 1837, 38.9% of all preachers were "circuit riders" and six years later in 1843, 35.7% were still traveling from station to station where no formal church was yet established. [53] The method of taking the Gospel to the people was successful for two reasons: contingency and commonality. Being where the people were was important, but being what the people

were was equally important. As Gaddis pointed out, the frontier sects that succeeded usually had men of "great enthusiasm and little academic preparation." [54] The frontier ideal was one of simplicity, self-sufficiency and rugged self-determination; the frontier community demanded that its ministers be democratic, one of the people and a person subject to the same hardships. [55] This commonality of experience also played a part in revealing some theological distinctions associated with the older denominations. With coastal standards of civility and ecclesiastical propriety, the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians strongly resisted the heavy frontier emphasis on revivals and camp meetings. [56] The vibrant, evangelizing sects not only accepted these methods but even more weren't seriously concerned about orthodoxy either. Splitting from the mainline Presbyterians in 1810, the Cumberland Presbyterians asserted that the ministry was primarily a "calling" and were vocal in resisting the idea that being a clergyman necessitated seminary training. Most of their preachers did not accept the New Haven theology of Dwight and chose rather to promote moderate stances in regards to the doctrines of strict election and innate reprobation. Common to this sect was an early embracing of "holiness ideals" which at the time were not common to the doctrine of sanctification. [57]

Although differing from the parent denomination in these points, the Cumberland Presbyterians were still strongly denominational in one significant trait — college founding. Beginning at first with very informal "Log Colleges", they eventually founded

full-fledged colleges like their mainline brethren. By 1843, they had established three colleges located in Princeton, Kentucky; Beverly, Ohio; and Lebanon, Tennessee. The reason stated by Beard was that "the ministry of the church is pious and generally intelligent and efficient men and great exertions are now making to raise still higher the standard of intelligence and usefulness." [58] This traditional commitment to higher education is consistent with Tewksbury's estimation:

> ...with its traditional emphasis on an educated ministry, it became a powerful influence in the development of higher education in this country...While the Presbyterian Church was essentially a frontier church, it was able to maintain throughout its history high standards of ministerial training, through the establishment of colleges on the successive lines of Presbyterian settlement across the continent. [59]

Tewksbury's carefully compiled data substantiated the differing priorities of denominational college founding. In the Antebellum period, forty-nine permanent colleges were established by the Presbyterians while the larger Methodist Church had established only thirty-four. With Tewksbury's listing of 182 permanent colleges in mind, 26.9% of them would be Presbyterian and 18.7% would be Methodist. [60] The commitment to colleges being established in the West by various denominations was not uniform. Although Rupp's History of the Religious Denominations in 1844 lists forty-three denominations, only fifteen of the historical accounts mention schools or colleges. [61]

A QUESTIONABLE CONFLICT: SECTARIANISM VS. DENOMINATIONALISM

At the heart of the Tewksbury hypothesis is the argument that smaller sectarian interests which founded the Western colleges

were overwhelmed by denominational forces attempting to incorporate these colleges under their sole control. The sectarian college eventually failed because denominational competition destroyed the local financial base for its support. [62] One must first begin to examine this claim by defining two terms: what is meant by "sectarian" and "denominational?" Hudson defines a sect as a religious group which "claims the authority of Christ for itself alone and is by definition exclusive, separate." [63] On the other hand a denomination is:

> ...an inclusive term, ecumenical, the group is but one member of a larger group — the Church [Universal] — to which all denominations belong. The true Church is not identified exclusively with any single eccelesiastical structure. It is a different mode of expressing in the outward forms of worship and organization that larger life of the Church in which they all share. [64]

If by a sect one implies 'exclusiveness' and assigns broader more ecumenical aims to a denomination, then is it possible that a sect naturally evolves with moderation into a denomination? If this were the case, it would be difficult to imagine denominational interests "taking over" the sectarian college. A second consideration must lie in Tewksbury's assertion that denominationalism somehow interferred with the ongoing local support of the sectarian college. It would seem just as probable that certain sectarian colleges failed either because they had outlived their intended purposes or the local economy simply collapsed through other extenuating circumstances. Let's examine these thoughts more closely.

I would maintain that few contemporary historians of higher education really understand the phenomenon of "sectarianism" as it occurred during the Antebellum period. First, sectarian

and local community interests usually went hand-in-hand and this Tewksbury admits. [65] For example, when the future members of the "Ohio Company of Associates" gathered in Rees Tavern in Providence, Rhode Island, Dr. Manasseh Cutler who was a Yale graduate enjoined them all "that the Directors be requested to pay early attention to the education of youth and the promotion of public worship among the first settlers." [66] To that end Reverend Daniel Story, a graduate of Dartmouth College, was engaged and later arrived at Fort Harmar (the future Marietta, Ohio) in 1789. The Ohio Company would later obtain an act incorporating Ohio University at Athens in 1802. Within three years of the issuance of the patents signed by President George Washington and Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, on October 2, 1787, Fort Harmar as a settlement of 132 persons would be established. [67] Town — school — college, this pattern would be repeated over and over again in the settling of the Western territories. City fathers, teachers and ministers working together to civilize the frontier and in many cases, all of these individuals were graduates of eastern colleges and seminaries. Secondly, the vastness of the frontier coupled with the challenge of westward expansion spawned a spirit of individualism which enhanced religious sectarianism as witnessed in the numbers of sects and the emergence of a toleration of religious pluralism. Clark has documented in his work The Small Sects in America that besides the major denominations mentioned by Rupp there were nearly fifty sects which formed or settled in the United States from 1790 to 1860. Among these were eight schisms from the Methodist Episcopal Church, thirteen Baptist splinter groups, five additional

divisions of the Presbyterian Church and a full eight variations in the already small Mennonite persuasion. [68] The American ideal —— freedom to believe what you wanted to believe and the vastness of the frontier which allowed the settlement of groups founded by commonly held beliefs, this was the sectarianism of the Antebellum period.

What about the concept that sects naturally develop into denominations as a natural course? As revivalism spread thoughout the West in the late eighteenth century, a zealous oversimplification of theological issues resulted. Get them "saved" —— that was the primary and urgent quest. Mead has proposed such a phenomenon and adds that the "revival system" clashed with the "system of catechism." There was a spirit of anti-intellectualism displayed by demogogic preachers and fiery evangelists who were not known to be ecclesiastical statesmen. [69] But —— after the dust settles and the ingathering of souls is complete, what do you do? Usually it is Christian discipleship which becomes the next concern —— get the converts into churches, but how? There are no ministers; there are no teachers or religious seminaries or colleges. Bordin in examining the Freewill Baptists has discussed the notion of the Troeltsch-Niebuhr thesis which states that all sects become denominations within one generation. Defining a denomination as having a uniformly trained clergy, she confirmed this thesis in the evidence she collected concerning the Freewill Baptists. In studying the types of ministerial training present in the clergy, she found a steady decline in the undereducated minister and a marked increase

of those with formal theological studies. In an abbreviated table spanning the period of our investigation, Bordin's data shows the following:

	1780-1799	1800-1809	1810-1819	1820-1829	1830-1839	1840-1849
GRP. 1 (untrained)	100%	100%	98%	93%	85%	69%
GRP. 2 (secondary or above)			2%	6%	6%	9%
GRP. 3 (formal theological)				1%	9%	22%
TOTAL IN NUMBER	20	44	60	107	175	280

* the downward pattern in Group 1 and the increases in the Group 3 percentages continues throughout the data. [70]

During this same period of time, of 1586 Congregational clergy only seventy-nine were not college graduates. As early as the period 1758-1789, of 250 Presbyterian ministers, some 120 were graduates exclusively of Princeton College. [71] An educated clergy would seem to signal the evolution of sect to denomination over time.

Returning to Tewksbury's hypothesis which alludes to denominational takeovers of the sectarian colleges, of secondary import is the relevant question of what is meant by "denominational competition?" This concept would appear to be in contradiction with the spirit of age. In the founding of the Western colleges, there are numerous examples of cooperation. One example is the Plan of Union of 1801 under which the Congregationalists and Presbyterians trained and exchanged ministers reciprocally. [72] In two separate articles, Findlay has addressed the cooperation which was evidenced in the SPCTEW, the agency systems employed by colleges which in many cases involved multidenominational support and Lyman Beecher's Voluntary Principle as seen in the American Tract Society. [73]

Hudson has pointed out that voluntary societies were at the heart of an evangelical spirit of cooperation; quoting a Lutheran, Samuel S. Schmucker, he explains: "denomination must naturally prefer its own peculiarities, it would be a dangerous error to regard these pecularities as equal in importance with the great fundamentals of our holy religion held in common by all." [74] He continues by noting the comments of Samuel Miller, a Presbyterian: "it would never occur to us to place the pecularities of our creed among the fundamentals of our common Christianity." [75] In closing this line of thought, it seems relevant to recreate what the terms "denominational" or "sectarian" might have meant to religious leaders of that period. One of the Yale Band, Julian Sturtevant defined "sectarian" as anything other than Congregational. [76] In the nineteenth century, more commonly the words "catholic" or "sectarian" were used to contrast very different meanings from our contemporary interpretations. Attributed to Horace Holley in an analysis of American college affiliations in 1813, catholic is defined as adhering "to the standard of Christ and the Bible." With this useage of semantics, the writer called Harvard "catholic" and Yale, Williams and Dartmouth with Andoverian theology as being "sectarian." [77] It seems likely that denominational competition would have been very difficult to substantiate in operational terms.

If denominational competition was not the exclusive cause of the demise of the sectarian colleges of the West, what other factors could have contributed? I would like to suggest that three additional ones be considered seriously: political interests

under the guise of denominational concerns, multiple periods of economic instability, and major sociological changes associated with urbanization. Once the West became "civilized," politically motivated forces in the East could simply have withdrawn or limited the freely flowing agency or society funds. Others have spoken to the powerful combination of pulpit-and-politics in describing the social impact of the Second Great Awakening. Shiels has noted well the rapidly developing preponderance of New Light clergy in Connecticut. Although he admits that the Second Great Awakening was not contrived to aid the Federalist cause, he does mention the New England churches' railing against the new Republican party. [78] Birdsall has also spoken to the undercurrents of politically motivated forces within the Congregationalists. The founding of benevolent societies and the thrust of home missions was not separate from the same political time period which saw the question of disestablishment being challenged in all of the original colonial states. [79] A notice, "Politics and Statistics," appearing in the 1832 edition of the New England Magazine described the Congressional Apportionment Bill and included a listing of the representatives' numbers. The seven New England states had seventy-eight seats of the 240 total in Congress, the Southern states and their territories had ninety-five and the Western frontier states had sixty-six. [80] It seems a safe bet that changing political forces in some way contributed to revised patterns of financial support for the local sectarian colleges.

The second factor I have proposed, that being, multiple periods of economic instability, was not considered in Tewksbury's

conclusions. Except for funds derived through the agency system, the sectarian colleges were primarily local concerns. Major periods of economic instability were a part of the Antebellum period; there were significant "crashes", "crises" or "recession-depressions" in 1819,1837, 1857 and 1873. The near failure of the United States Bank in the summer of 1818 caused or rather compelled state banks to redeem their notes in specie or close their doors. State bank issues were consequently reduced from 100 million in 1817 to 45 million in 1819. So rampant were foreclosures in Cincinnati that the national bank ended up owning large portions of the city. It is no wonder that many western states angrily passed acts taxing the United States Bank which continued until resolved in McCullock vs. Maryland.[81] The Panic of 1837 which began with the Distribution Act of 1836 would also have stretched the local support for colleges to the limit. Western banks were caught in a vicious cycle of local assets being tied to land office deposits and withdrawals affected by speculative land prices.[82] In his book, The Stakes of Power, 1845-1877, Roy F. Nichols examined the results of the Panics of 1857 and 1873. Unstable securities' markets, the debate over the Gold Standard, the overvaluing of many railroad issues and the frequent fluctuations in the availability of currency in the West —— all of these conditions could have caused many sectarian colleges to fail along with many other worthy enterprises.[83]

Finally, by the mid-nineteenth century, the West was no longer "wilderness" and its populace "unChristianized." A notice in the Monthly Record of August, 1831 indicates that the Miami Canal

to Cincinnati carried $778,342 in property conveyed which amounted in the collection of $19,037 in tolls. At the same time, the Ohio Canal to Cleveland carried 8,109,952 pounds of cargo in one year. [84] An article in Chicago History recently described the unique "firsts" for the growing city of 20,000 inhabitants in the year 1848: first telegraph delivery; Galena and Chicago Union Railroad begun; the steam locomotive "Pioneer" was delivered to the city; Illinois-Michigan Canal opened; the "Southwestern Blank Road"(an innovation) was commissioned; the ocean-going steamship "Ireland" docked from Montreal; and by September,1948, the first stockyard and steam powered grain elevator were in operation. [85] With this increased urbanization and development of the West, another competitive force entered the scene of education —— the public schools. Handy has mentioned that although the public schools were quickly promoted as non-sectarian, they were still for the most part Protestant in their teaching of religious values. [86] In even the smallest towns of the Northwest Territory, publically tax-supported schools were being established. As a result of the Ohio State Legislature's "Akron Act of 1847", my hometown, Massillon, Ohio opened the doors of Union School in October, 1848. This was possible because the Massillon Union School District, approved by the General Assembly on February 21, 1848, had just passed the city's first tax levy for the support of schools. It is recorded on May 14, 1848 that the vast sum of $2,000 was approved by a vote of 134 to 10. [87] As a visible evidence of the civilizing of the West, the public schools certainly would have decreased the colleges' monopoly on education in the West and by competing for local dollars caused some to fail.

SUMMARY

In the study of higher education, Tewksbury's comprehensive study of the Antebellum colleges still stands as an outstanding piece of historical research. The fundamental value of his work as it documents the contributions of the sectarian college to American education in the Western territories is an unquestionable accomplishment. An individual probably risks charges of heresy to suggest that Tewksbury's conclusions about the failure of many sectarian colleges was an oversimplification. I have asserted, though, that his analysis of the effects of the rise of denominationalism was separated from the Antebellum cultural forces associated with sectarianism and revivalism as a part of "the quest for a Christian America." Inferences about denominationalism must be viewed in light of each denominational history which is as much about theological ideas as it is numbers of converts or churches. The much broader context of the socioreligious effects of the Second Great Awakening must also be considered when addressing the institutions of the Antebellum period. The evolutionary changes in major themes of post-Revolutionary theology is imperative if one is to understand how home missions and evangelism was nurtured by the New Haven, "New Lights." Of course, the New Haven theology cannot be separated from the interrelationships of the clergy and their "genetic lineage" traced through from Jonathan Edwards. Most certainly, the concept that denominational competition destroyed the local support basis for the sectarian college is tenuous. Changing economic conditions, political influences, the rise of the public school system and the successful "taming" of the West surely caused some colleges to fail.

From a purely personal level, this researcher regained a new and fresh appreciation for the "fruits" of historical research. One of the fruitful contributions of this study has been its sampling "of the flavour of the period." The wild enthusiasm of the revivals, the Western frontier culture, the fears of the "pious Eastern establishment," and the zealous dedication of the individuals like the men of the "Yale Band" —— all of these help to add some missing pieces to the "mysterious causes of death" in a discussion of the demise of many sectarian colleges. Historians will maintain that in reconstructing the Past, many valuable insights into the Present are realized; this has been especially true for me. This investigation has allowed for many valuable insights into the current climate of educational change and conflict present in the United States. As a professional advocate of the Christian Day School Movement, I believe we must be careful not to divorce our schools from their ties to the Revivalist traditions of the Antebellum period. There are many striking similarities: the zeal and dedication to establish schools "in the midst of a heathen culture," the "mission" to somehow save and preserve traditional values, and the dependence of the Christian schools on local support. In regards to the rapid growth of Christian schools, let us hope that the Tewksbury hypothesis is not prophetic in predicting large numbers of them failing financially. One thing is certain; it is very important to establish the historical setting of any great social phenomenon in order to better understand more fully its strengths, its weaknesses, and potential for success. The Western colleges

of the Antebellum period do serve to graphically illustrate what the religious groups of our nation can accomplish when the "Spirit is poured out upon your sons and daughters so that they shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions."

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[15] Ibid., 154.

[16] Ibid.
See also descriptions of 'eye-gouging' in "Frontier Fights," in Pioneers and Preachers: Stories of the Old Frontier by Robert William Mondy (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980), 107-27.

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See also: Karl Keller, "The Loose, Large Principles of Solomon Stoddard," Early American Literature, 16-1 (Spring, 1981), 27-41. This article describes the persuasive writing style of the founder of congregationalism as a community-covenant of grace.

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[57] Ibid., 167.

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